

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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NO. 36.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xiii. 34.

FROM THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE.

A COMPENDIUM

Of a Sermon delivered on the Evening of the second Sabbath in March, at the Second Universalist Meeting in Boston, by HOSEA BALLOU, pastor.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."—Gen. iii. 4.

THE particular reason why this passage is chosen for our subject this evening is, the enemies of the gospel of our salvation have made recent exertions to persuade people to believe that this gospel is the doctrine which the serpent held up to the woman in the garden. These deceived, benighted brethren of ours have lately published to the world, that the doctrine of universal salvation is a devilish doctrine, and that the devil was the first Universalist preacher. This sort of language is in the mouths of our enemies generally, but more especially is it used by those who profess to be preachers of the gospel of the grace of God, and perhaps think they are, but who are unquestionably deceived.

The object we have in view, this evening, will be accomplished if we succeed in making it evident to the good understanding of this attentive audience,

I. What the death was, which was threatened in case of transgression in the garden.

II. That what the serpent said to the woman is no part of, nor any ways like the gospel of God's universal grace and salvation.

III. That those, who, in order to oppose universal salvation, contend that the devil preached it to the woman in the garden, do themselves constantly and zealously contend that what

the serpent said unto the woman, when he said, "Ye shall not surely die," was the truth; and that they now hold up to the people the same testimony by which the serpent tempted the woman to sin, and that they now tempt people to sin by the same temptation.

Our heavenly Father told Adam, that in the day he should eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he should surely die. We are informed that Adam and Eve both partook of this forbidden fruit; and we have no more reason to doubt that they died in the day of their transgression, than we have that the divine Being spake the truth. Will the hearer object and say, that Adam lived a number of hundred of years after his transgression? We reply. The scriptures must have the privilege of explaining their own language. This is what is allowed to all books and to all writings in the world. The moral state of man, when a sinner, is called death in the scriptures. Jesus said to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." He also said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying he shall never see death." Now it is perfectly plain, that Jesus had no allusion to the death of the body in these passages, but to the moral state of those who should reject or keep his word.—See John viii.

St. Paul in Rom. v. says; "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passes upon all men, for that all have sinned." In Rom. vii. we find the following; "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." See chap. viii.; "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death—For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." We need not multiply quotations to show that a state of moral

righteousness is called life, and that a state of sin is called death in scripture language. We see then that every man dies in the day of his transgression as Adam did. To be carnally minded is death. Sin and death are inseparably connected. St. Paul says; "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." According to this passage, when does a man die? Answer, when he lives after the flesh. When does he live? Answer, when he thro' the spirit mortifies the deeds of the body. By bringing these scriptures together it is not difficult to see that temptation arose in the first place from the same fountain that it arises from now. St. James says; "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away with his own lusts and enticed." This lust, this carnal mind is the serpent which beguiles us, and it is the serpent which beguiled Eve in the garden. This serpent always says; "Ye shall not surely die." It persuades us to believe that sin will yield us enjoyment, and flatters us that we shall have peace and comfort in it; but it never speaks the truth, it was a liar from the beginning, and when it speaks a lie it speaks of itself, for it is the father of lies.

If the hearer is now satisfied concerning the death which Adam and all men die in consequence of sin, we may proceed, as was proposed, to show that the declaration of the serpent, that "Ye shall not surely die," is no part of the gospel of universal salvation. What is the salvation which the gospel effects? Answer, it saves the sinner from sin and from the death of sin.—As before quoted, St. Paul says; "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Again; "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord—For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life."

We further learn the nature and power of the gospel in Eph. ii. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins—God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." By such testimony we learn that the gospel gives life to those who are dead in sin. This death in sin is the death which the serpent said that the woman should not die; but from this death the gospel of Jesus gives us life. Is this gospel of life from sin to holiness, from death to life the doctrine which the serpent held up to the woman? My hearers, you have the question now fairly before you. Did the devil, as our enemies say, preach this gospel of life and salvation by Jesus Christ? Did he tell the woman that she should die if she sinned; but that Jesus the Son of God, would deliver her by the power of his grace from sin and death? Did the devil ever preach that Jesus would bruise his head, give himself a ransom for all mankind, and draw all men to himself? Did the devil ever say to the woman in the garden; "God, your Father in heaven will send his Son into the world to destroy death and him who has the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage?" Did the devil persuade Eve to believe that God had given mankind eternal life, and that this life was in his Son? Is it the devil that says, that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world? My friends, it pains me to the heart, to have occasion to ask these questions. Do our poor deluded brethren know what they say, when they pertinaciously contend that the devil was the first Universalist preacher? No, surely they do not; and we fervently pray that God may not lay this sin to their charge.

As we evidently see that this gospel of universal grace and salvation from sin and death is the very opposite of the serpent's guile, we shall proceed, as was proposed, to prove that our enemies and the enemies of this gospel do in fact hold up the doctrine of the tempter, and make out, according to their arguments, that the serpent spake the truth to Eve, and that what the Creator said was not fulfilled.

Our enemies say that the death which was threatened in the garden was death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal. But do they pretend that Adam died temporally and eternally in the day of his transgression? No; but they say he became liable to these deaths. Well the serpent did not say that they would not be *liable* to die, he said they should not *surely* die; and these our opposers now contend that they did not die. Then who spake the truth? God said that they should die in the day of transgression; the serpent said they should not, and these our opposers say that they did not! This part of the subject is plain. Now see if these pretended gospel preachers do not in fact hold up the very doctrine now, which the serpent proposed to Eve. What was his doctrine? Did he tell Eve that she should not be damned eternally in another world if she committed sin? No, he said nothing about this.—What did he say? He said, "Ye shall not surely die." When? Answer, in the day of transgression. Well this is just what our opposers now contend for. They say that the punishment of sin is not here in the present state where it is committed. They try all they can to make people believe, that in the present state sin yields enjoyment; and they say if they were sure of eternal happiness hereafter, they would by all means live in sin in this life. This is most surely the way that carnal mind tempts us to sin. We may examine ourselves or others and we shall find that temptation to sin proceeds on this, and no other ground. Go ask that poor dissipated creature whether he indulges his sensual appetites with a view of making himself happy in some future day, or in another world? Will he tell you that such is his expectation? No, such temptation never presented itself to man. The temptation is an expectation of present pleasure, of present gratification, of happiness in the present tense; and it always says; "Ye shall not surely die;" but we always find that sin brings death along with it. Lust, when it conceives, brings forth sin; and sin, when it is committed, brings forth death.

From this plain and simple statement of matter of fact, we see that all those preachers, who deny the present

condemnation of sin, here where it is committed, are using the same argument which the tempter used in the beginning, and prove themselves to be governed by carnal mind. In fact they are aiding the cause of temptation by insinuating that sin yields happiness in the present life. My friends, you are not to understand me to mean that those preachers to whom I allude design to aid temptation and to lead people into sin; but they being themselves deceived, are the blind who lead the blind; and both leaders and followers are all in the ditch of death and condemnation together. Solomon describes this subject in the 9th of Proverbs, thus; "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell." The preacher says, if I was sure of happiness in a future world, I would live in sin in this; I would lie, cheat, get drunk, commit all manner of lewdness, I would even commit murder. Well, my friends, God looks at the heart. How far is this preacher, in his heart, from all this wickedness? As long as preachers entertain such opinions and maintain such sentiments, we may expect no small degree of hypocrisy and deception to be practised among them.

Perhaps the hearer will ask one question more, viz. did not the Creator threaten Adam with punishment beyond this state? Answer; look at his words, recorded in the chapter where our text is found. "And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Whoever extends the consequences of sin beyond this testimony, does it in violation of the word of God; and whoever flatters himself or others that thorns and thistles are not in the way of transgression, is a deceiver and is in the depths of hell.

Christian Messenger.*Philadelphia, Saturday, April 7, 1821.*

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I. No. 2. *Philadelphia February, 1821.*

One strong proof of the incorrectness of a doctrine, or of the weakness of the evidence upon which it is founded, is, in our opinion, an anxious desire evinced on the part of its supporters to save it from the test of an investigation, and an endeavour, as far as it is in their power, to prevent the arguments advanced in opposition to it from being read by those who have adopted the doctrine as their rule of faith. A cause, whose foundation is truth, instead of losing, gains strength and forces conviction upon the mind of every candid enquirer, when, in the course of controversy, the clear and conclusive testimony by which it is supported, is contrasted with the cunningly devised fables, perverted testimony and sophistical conclusions, upon which the cause of falsehood must depend for support; hence, we will find all those who aim at truth, and truth only, and who feel seriously convinced of the correctness of their cause, never shrinking from investigation, but, on the contrary, embracing with pleasure every opportunity that enables them publicly to lay before their opponents "the law and the testimony," not dreading a defeat, if what they advanced be found accordant with them, and earnestly soliciting it, if the contrary should be the case. These observations have been particularly suggested by the work before us, in the preface to the first number of which, we are informed, that nothing designed to controvert the doctrines advanced in the course of the work, will be admitted into its pages, or, in other words, "the work is not to be controversial;"—and, in the initial essay of the present number, Mr. Potts assures us, that neither is it his desire nor design to excite controversy by what he has written, but

only to establish believers in the bible, in what he is pleased to stile, "the essential doctrines of the gospel" (page 49 col. 1) which is in effect saying, that he wishes his doctrines to be received by the public, without investigation, or if any of his readers *should* examine for themselves, and find any difficulty in reconciling them with reason and the divine testimony, desiring them not to call upon him in any public manner to do away these difficulties, for though he fills the office of a public teacher, it is not his "desire nor design" to enter into any open defence of his doctrines, in answer to the objections that may be urged against them. But, every teacher who comes before the public with a declared intention of promulgating any doctrines, but particularly doctrines of such general interest, involving points of such serious import, as those which are connected with religion and a future state, by so doing, however little he may have intended it, invites investigation; and he owes it to the cause he advocates, to himself, and to the public, who have now become parties interested, to meet, by fact and by argument, every opposition which is upheld with candour; and whether or not Mr. Potts and his reverend colleagues consider this to be binding on them, *we* are determined not to receive for truth the opinions of these or of any other set of men, until we have compared them with the scriptures of truth, to see "whether these things be so or not," and, if we find, from "the only true record," that these gentlemen have advanced any thing that is erroneous, nothing that they say to the contrary shall prevent us from laying the evidence before the same public, to whom they have presented their doctrines, and requesting them to determine for themselves, which they will believe; the assertions of Mr. Potts and his brethren, or "the word of God."

The first article of the present number, is an essay on "*Divine Punishment*," by Rev. George C. Potts—It commences by mentioning that a difference of opinion exists among those who claim the Christian name, and goes on, very properly, to observe, that, "to search after truth, and to embrace it when found should be the earnest desire and employment of all who as-

sume the name of Christ;"—That, at the present day, "when truth is left unsought; when, by bold assertion and critical dexterity, it is evaded or concealed," it has become necessary for all who have embraced the name of Jesus, to act a different part from that of Pilate, who, when he enquired of Christ "what is truth?" waited not the answer. With all this we entirely coincide, and, it is because we have always believed it to be correct, that we have been induced to examine for ourselves the truth of every doctrine that is presented to us for acceptance, whether bearing the authority of Synods, councils or assemblies.—It is because we believe it our duty to embrace and hold fast truth when we have found her, that we have adopted the doctrines of Christ, in preference to those set forth in the creeds, confessions of faith and catechisms of human invention, though by so doing, like our Lord and master, we are accused of perverting the scriptures—of being the friend of sinners:—and again, while we are ever ready to state and support what we believe the scriptures declare to be *truth*, we conceive we are bound to hear the answer of our opponents on the same subject; and on that account, we invite them to discuss the question, and present to them, for that purpose, a free admission into the columns of the "Christian Messenger," for as our aim is truth, and not the defence of human doctrines, we tremble not at investigation, but throw open the pages of our work to every candid enquirer.

The design of Mr. P. in the essay before us, is to enquire "in what character God punishes sin;" previously, however, to entering into an examination of the immediate object of enquiry, Mr. P. makes the following observations, which are so perfectly accordant with our sentiments in regard to the almighty, that we cannot refrain from transcribing them. "That God is a sovereign, is verified in every page of inspiration, and the great volume of nature attests the fact. His dominion is universal and illimitable. In all his works *greatness* in conjunction with *goodness*, strikes our view, and wherever we see the parent, we behold also the legislator. Jehovah is a benefactor in whom we have reason to rejoice, whose purposes are gracious,

whose law is the plan of our happiness. Every good and perfect gift comes down from him." (page 49 col 2.)

But, we ask, if Mr. P. admits that "the purposes of God" in regard to man, "are gracious," and that, "his law is the plan of our happiness;" and if God, as he must also admit, in determining those purposes, and in planning that law, exerted *infinite wisdom*, so as to adapt them to the varying capacities and circumstances of all his creatures, and he carries his purposes and his law into effect by *infinite power*;—if the counsel of God shall stand, and his pleasure be performed, and no one can resist his will, which is his law; (Isai. xlv. 10.) and, in the day of his power, his people shall be willing to perform his will; (Psalm cx. 3.) how can Mr. P. reconcile this with the doctrine he advocates, which teaches that some of God's creatures shall be eternally miserable;—and to whom his law and his purposes shall not be a plan of happiness.—Either in laying the plan, there must have been some want of wisdom, or some defect of power in carrying it into execution, or its effect, the happiness of man, must be produced.

From the following it would appear, Mr. P. believes, that the deity, in relation to man, possesses different characters; and that, to him in one of his characters belong acts and intentions, which cannot be ascribed to him in his other characters.

"It does not appear," says Mr. P. "from nature or revelation, that God uniformly acts as a sovereign, for, many of his works must be attributed to him under another relation. He is revealed to us under the endearing title of father—as a king—frequently as an unlimited sovereign, and often as a judge and ruler. To assign to God under one relation, or to give to him under a wrong relation, those things which belong to him in another, is to confound the truths of the word of God. This leads to many mistakes, and occasions errors of the grossest kind." (page 49 col. 2.)

For the doctrines contained in these quotations, we have no warrant whatever, from scripture; for although God is there spoken of under the appellations of a father, a judge, a king, &c. yet, these are certainly to be under-

stood only as expressions used figuratively, and not as implying that God is divided in his character—or, that in one character, he acts differently from what he does in another. God being a spirit, he cannot with propriety be said to be composed of parts, and the general tenor of scripture teaches us, also, that in his essence, character, and actions, there is a unity or *oneness*, that all he purposes, all he performs, must flow from one principle, and all must tend to one end.

"God is love," (1 John iv. 8.) and consequently, whatever he does, must proceed from this his nature, and, therefore, his acts as sovereign, as father or as judge, must all and each of them be acts of love, and it is impossible, as long as God is one, that he can ever perform acts which are opposed to each other, either in their origin, or their end; and, on this account, it is of no importance to enquire in what character God is the punisher of sin, seeing that in whatever one we may determine it to be, it must proceed from the self same principle—love,—and must tend to the same end, the permanent advantage of all the objects of God's love.—If God, as the father of his children and from his mercy, would wish to save all sinners, but, as their judge and from his justice, was obliged, contrary to that wish, to inflict on some, and that the much greater number, eternal misery—would there not be a direct opposition and want of harmony in the different characters and attributes of Jehovah, and could it be said, that God, equally in his judicial as in his paternal character, was a God of love. * * *

To be continued.

OBITUARY.

[The following is the *obituary* notice mentioned in our last.]

It becomes our painful duty to record the death of another distinguished and active member of the first Universalist church in this city; and while we bear a sympathetic part in the sorrows of his bereaved family, it is but justice due to departed worth to offer this tribute of respect to the memory of our deceased brother and friend; one who has left behind him a name that is better than rubies, and the circumstances of whose death has given an ample refutation to that vain notion, that the doctrine of Universal Salva-

tion is good to live by, but not to die by; for whoever witnessed the bedside of our deceased friend must have been made sensible that his faith was not only capable of giving consolation in life, but also support in death. Mr. TIMOTHY BLAKE, the subject of this memoir, was attacked sometime in August last, with an inflammation in the breast, which left him with a distressing cough that kept him in a debilitated state through the winter. Having received an appointment from the mayor of the city, he continued in business as long as his strength would possibly permit, nor did he quit it till some time after he was sensible his dissolution was approaching. That faith which he had long possessed had not only robbed death of its sting, but had removed from the idea of the grave all its terrors. That tranquility of mind with which he closed his business, that composure of heart with which he spoke of his death and burial, but above all, that faith, hope and confidence, mingled with conjugal and paternal affection, with which he resigned up his family into the hands of that God who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe, must have left traces on the minds of his surviving friends and relations as lasting as time; and, the recollection of which, will be to them a source of never failing consolation. Being a member of several beneficial societies, as well as an active member of the church, his funeral was numerously attended, a sure token that virtue, let it move in ever so humble a station, does not go unrewarded. The *American Daily Advertiser*, of March 23d gave the following honourable notice of his death.

"DIED, on the 21st inst. in the 42d year of his age, Mr. TIMOTHY BLAKE, after a short though severe pulmonary complaint. A firm practical believer in the salvation of the whole human family, he met the herald of eternal life with full confidence in his God; the brightness of faith beamed on the closing scene, and he sunk to repose with the dignity of the Christian and the calmness of a philosopher.

The pen of eulogy can add no lustre to the departed, though it may invite the living to follow an example that will enable them to pass through life with serenity, and rest in hope of a glorious immortality."

DIED, on the 3d inst. Mr. WILLIAM WOOD, lately from England, in the 64th year of his age. Thus has fallen another firm believer in the restitution of all things, which faith enabled him, although his death was quite sudden, both to himself and family, to die with the greatest composure imaginable. Since his arrival in this country, and while his health would permit, he has been a regular and constant attendant at the Universalist church in Lombard street.

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